

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE VIA CONFERENCE CALL SUBJECT: ON POINT II, THE U.S. ARMY'S FIRST HISTORICAL STUDY OF ITS CAMPAIGN IN IRAQ BRIEFERS: DONALD WRIGHT, CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONS STUDY TEAM MEMBER; COLONEL TIMOTHY REESE CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONS STUDY TEAM MEMBER MODERATOR: LIEUTENANT JENNIFER CRAGG, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS TIME: 2:30 P.M. EDT DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 30, 2008.

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LT. CRAGG: Hello, I'd like to welcome you all to Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Monday, June 30th. My name is Lieutenant Jennifer Cragg with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating our call today.

A note to the bloggers on the line today, I know we have Grim so far. Please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization that you are affiliated with.

Today, our guests are Dr. Donald Wright and Colonel Timothy Reese, the authors of On Point II. Dr. Wright -- who's joining us? Q Hi, this is Jason Sigger.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, Jason. And as -- Jason, we're introducing Colonel Reese and Dr. Wright.

Who's joining us?

MR. WRIGHT: Was that our queue?

LT. CRAGG: Who just joined us?

Okay -- keep on going.

Dr. Wright and Colonel Reese are here today to make questions -- to take questions about the purpose of writing the book, the process by which it was researched, written and approved and about the key insights and analysis that emerged from the Army's operations during the first 18 months after the toppling of Saddam's regime.

With that, we are pleased to have these two guests today.

I'm going to turn it over to you, gentlemen. Dr. Wright, if you want to start first.

MR. WRIGHT: Actually, Colonel Reese is going to start off the discussion.

LT. CRAGG: Great. Thank you, sir.

COL. REESE: Hello, everyone. I appreciate you coming on the blog with us today and I'll just make a very short opening statement and leave most of the time for us to answer questions and talk about the book in detail based on what you're interested in.

But just to put it in context for a moment or two, the Combat Studies Institute is essentially a military history think tank at the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth here in Kansas. And so as part of TRADOC we have a general mission to do military history in ways that will be useful to the Army for its education or operational or doctrinal writing purposes. And as such, On Point II is one of a series of military history books that we have continually produced, On Point II being one of our contemporary history products that Dr. Wright's team is in charge of producing and that's what we're here to talk about today. But it is part of a broader history research and publishing effort, and we will soon -- I say soon -- next year, we'll publish the first volume in the series on the war in Afghanistan and we hope to continue both series alternating on and off for a couple of years until the -- both campaigns come to an end.

And I think I'd like to capture the purpose of the project, not by reading you General Wallace's forward but by -- just by mentioning that in the forward to the book General Wallace's comments on how this book should be seen in the context of the Army as a learning organization that has a culture of introspection and self-examination whether it's in after-action review at a training exercise or a military history project like this one where the Army tries to learn as best it can from its operations -- good, bad or otherwise -- to assist in conducting operations in the future and in the training and educating Army leaders for the future.

And at -- without boring you any further, that's the context we wanted to give you, and we're open to questions or we're open to continuing to talk if that's what you'd prefer. (Chuckles.)

LT. CRAGG: Colonel, did you want Dr. Wright to have any opening -- provide an opening statement as well or do you want to go straight into the questions?

COL. REESE: Let's just go ahead and go straight into questions and we'll just -- we'll see where it goes.

LT. CRAGG: Okay, roger that.

Grim, you were the first one on the line. Let's go ahead with you. Please start with your questions.

Q Yes, gentlemen, I would like to ask what you see as the fallout from the need to redeploy the Fourth Infantry Division which is initially supposed to go in through Turkey. Were there any positives to how that shook out with the sort of fog of war or was it all negative and how did you find that we dealt with that?

MR. WRIGHT: This is Don Wright. I would say that to a degree it worked out fairly well because it kept some of Saddam's forces, you know, up there north of Baghdad. And they remained fairly -- with their feet in concrete for a while and I believe we have a quote or reference to General Franks talking about the need to keep them up there -- keep them afloat in the Mediterranean

until he felt like he had enough forces -- especially special forces 173rd Brigade and the Kurds working it to the north. So I think as far as Phase III goes, it did lend -- give coalition forces an advantage, yes.

Now, when you talk about transition to Phase IV, one could argue that perhaps because the Fourth ID had to go through Kuwait, do RSOI there, move quickly up through Baghdad and into Salahuddin province and other parts of the Sunni triangle -- because of that there were forces left in that area that had not seen a U.S. military unit or a coalition military unit. And there is an argument out there that this is why the Fourth ID conducts full spectrum operations the way that they do in that the months immediately after the toppling of the Saddam regime.

But if you're talking about Phase III, it seems pretty clear that it did keep a significant number of Ba'athist military forces north of Baghdad which made the Third IDs and the first (MET's ?) job a little bit easier. Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Grim, do you have follow-on questions?

Q Is there any evidence to suggest that Saddam had deployed any of his Republican Guard units in sort of a counterinsurgency mode against a possible uprising by his own people when we invaded?

MR. WRIGHT: The sources we worked with discussed not the Republican Guards units but some of Saddam's intelligence agencies -- and I suppose you could lump in as special Republican Guards into that as well. I mean, there's some good works by people like Colonel Derek Harvey and others that describe how these organizations had always -- had created a framework or a network even before coalition forces started deploying into Kuwait, right? I mean, they had to be stationed and have weapon caches available in case the Kurds or the Shi'a decided to conduct a revolt. And so when U.S. forces come in in March of '03 some of those forces, especially the intelligence agencies, seemed to have conducted that plan -- that they sort of went underground, went out to the weapons caches and began to prepare for some type of struggle against an invading force. And I believe that that's pretty well documented.

Now, the way that we pick that up, that's part of the story when we talk about the nature of the insurgency as it develops in the summer of '03, and we argue that -- from the sources we have and we don't use Iraqi insurgent sources, maybe just a few because there aren't that many available to Western historians, Western analysts -- but that insurgent -- that Sunni insurgent network is built on that framework of the Saddamist organizations. And that's an important point. And we are still hearing that those Saddamist agencies, Saddamist organizations form at least -- if maybe not the main backbone -- still part of the skeleton of the insurgency today.

Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: With that, let's move on to Jason.

Jason, go ahead with your questions, please.

Q Hi, I was unable to download the document today -- I really wanted to look through it but I didn't have that opportunity. I did have a chance to look through the first book, of course, and I enjoyed the coverage of

the WMD search that the Army supported with the 75th Exploitation Task Force. Of course, On Point ended when -- where your book picks up.

So my question is, does the book address the follow-on efforts with the Iraq Survey Group -- well, actions that the Army may have done in support of the Iraq Survey Group, to put it that way? MR. WRIGHT: I'll give you two answers. One, no, not really; but two, with a little more context -- during that first summer, you know, summer of 2003 that we were writing about, a lot of the intelligence assets in Iraq were used to hunt for the weapons of mass destruction and using intelligence from various sources. So there was a lot of activity around the country as we sought to find places where they might be. And so a significant portion of the U.S. government's intelligence assets were focused on that mission during the summer.

And one of the things that we discovered in talking to some of the Army intelligence folks that we met with was that it took some time for those assets to be redirected towards the developing resistance or insurgency toward the occupation.

And so there was a bit of a competition for assets in May, June, July, August time frame. And then by the early fall, most of those assets in the WMD hunt had either ceased that mission and gone home or ceased that mission and were available to do other things.

And again, on the intelligence front, the -- not the competition -- the demand by the late summer was for human intelligence and much more so than it was for technical intelligence, looking for hard items like WMD sites.

I don't know if that helps you answer that question too well or not.

Q Sure. Yeah, it does. And if I can follow up with another question?

LT. CRAGG: Please go ahead.

Q Okay. A little bit more recently, I guess about two years ago or so, we started seeing some of the use of the chlorine in the vehicle IEDs. I was wondering perhaps -- I have been unable to get much comment out of CENTCOM as far as lessons learned concepts and impacts, those things of that nature.

I was wondering if On Point II might address any of those issues.

MR. WRIGHT: No, we don't get deep into the IEDs. One of the reasons why we don't is because there are OpSec concerns that prevent us as a government agency talking about these things. But in general, I don't remember running into any unclassified sources that talk about the use of that type of material in the IEDs that coalition forces are running into in '03 and '04.

COL. REESE: I think those attacks come later, and I'd have to -- I don't want to put the year on it, but it was certainly after the period of this book, which ended in January of '05. And Don is right about the security classification.

But I think we can say that in our continuing research for the subsequent volumes of this series, that has not been a big topic that comes up in our research with veterans from that period or the leaders. It does happen. There are chlorine bombs used, but it doesn't seem to have the -- an effect

that's nearly as important as the tradition VBIEDs or regular IEDs. Q Sure. I understand. It's just a niche area of mine that I've got to ask about.

COL. REESE: Sure. It's a good question.

LT. CRAGG: Do you have another question, Jason?

Q Sure. I'm sorry to hear that --

LT. CRAGG: I believe it's going to be Jason and Grim. We were expecting a few other bloggers. Did anybody else come on the call? (No audible response.) Okay, you two continue. I'm sure there's going to be other bloggers -- (inaudible) -- the call.

Q Hey, Jen, I'm sort of here, too.

LT. CRAGG: Is this Jim?

Q Yeah.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Go ahead -- and Grim, just go back and forth with your questions.

Q Well, actually, gentleman, I was wondering if -- you have a chapter in there on the battle of ideas. And I'm wondering if you would discuss the preparation for fighting that battle, or the lack of preparation in it.

COL. REESE: (Laughs.) Wow. That's a broad question. Let me try to approach one part of it.

During the phase three of the operation, the invasion, the primary emphasis was on getting the word out to the uniformed portion of Iraqi military forces that if they did not leave their barracks or did not take up arms in a threatening way, they would not be attacked. And so that was the primary effort, along with disrupting chain of command -- or communication systems, that sort of thing.

And that was, in large respect, successful. There obviously were -- there was a lot of hard fighting along the way, but quite a few number of Iraqi units never left their barracks or their enclosures. They just literally packed up and went home, in most cases.

But what happened after the mid-April time frame, after the famous pulling-down of Saddam's statue and everything, is that the message wasn't readily available to the Iraqi people from the U.S. Army or the U.S. military as to what was going to happen next.

There was this sort of pause in the battle for ideas where we didn't know what the message ought to be. Are we promising you a new government right away? That was certainly the position of Lieutenant General Garner's organization, ORHA. Yet by mid-May, that position had changed under the coalition provisional authority, and now we were talking -- Ambassador Bremer was talking about maybe up to a three- year period of coalition occupation before the Iraqi self-government came in. So those are sort of strategic-level dilemmas.

At the tactical level, you have a large number of units around the country in the American Army and coalition forces that don't have psychological operations or civil affairs assets with them in that very first few months. And so there's sort of a dearth of local message and themes being put out.

Now, that begins to change throughout this whole period and gets better as it goes, and there's a number of interesting examples of units that have their own campaigns about everything from simple stuff, like rules of the road when driving and how to pick up trash in your neighborhood to how we're going to form a local advisory council in your town or your province to help establish some self-government, and it gets better over time. But we certainly aren't ready for it right there in the summer of 2003.

The 101st Airborne Division is one that's pretty good at it up north in the Kurdish region under then-Major General Petraeus, and they have a number of initiatives regarding the school system up there, provincial government, economic reconstruction, that are pretty effective.

So in places around the country, units kind of take up the slack and develop their own messages and programs, and they filter up towards the higher headquarters, rather than from the higher headquarters down.

Q Should it have started at the higher headquarters and gone down, or should there have been a mix? And how did this delay things, not having a unified message?

COL. REESE: Well, yes, there should've been a mix, obviously. You always want both the strategic picture. You know, what is the overall message, what is the coalition plan for Iraq in -- or, on April the 10th, the day after the Saddam statue was pulled down?

Was it an immediate turnover of power to some sort of coalition -- excuse me, not coalition -- some sort of Iraqi governing body, or was it going to be a multi-year process of allied occupation leading to a constitution and elections? That was certainly missing, and it was a message that changed radically in the course of 30 days, so that hurt.

I don't know if that answers your question exactly.

Q Yeah, it did. I'm wondering who should have been developing these things. Who was responsible for not having that in place? MR. WRIGHT: It's pretty clear that in the lead-up to phase three, 5th Corps -- and we looked a bit at 5th Corps, that's the largest Army tactical level force -- did exercises and planning for what would come after the fall of the regime. And they begin to think about some of these things -- what kind of proclamations would be necessary? What type of looting and disorder would they face?

And so 5th Corps, I think if you got into some of the -- if we had a chance to get into some of the classified information, you'd see some of these things. But as we know, 5th Corps is a tactical level organization that quickly has to become the CJTF.

And because this organization has become the CJTF at the same time that Mr. Bremer's coming in, and Mr. Bremer is changing the assumptions of the military forces on the ground, I think all of this is sort of up in the air in May and June of '03.

The best example is assumptions about Saddam's military forces; were they going to stay and be sort of restructured, perhaps purged of his top leadership, but essentially the Saddamist army would remain and be called something new, or would they go? And we know that now, that Mr. Bremer comes in and disbands, officially disbands the Saddamist military institutions.

You can imagine that in that chaos where assumptions are changing every day, it would have been very difficult for the military to sort of form this overall command message to the population about exactly where the coalition hoped to take Iraq and its citizens.

So I think that from April 10th through June 15th is a very fluid situation in which it would be hard to imagine this type of thing coming out in any kind of cogent, organized sense.

COL. REESE: This is Colonel Reese. Don is exactly right. Just to follow on it, this was not the focus of our study. But I think those strategic-level things that we have just been speaking about, those are obviously made at a national policy level -- on the military side, at the Joint Chiefs level, and on the civilian side at the National Security Council, Ambassador Bremer, that level.

And those weren't really the focus of our study. We looked at that to the extent that we needed to understand it and explain its impacts on the armed forces -- on the ground in Iraq.

LT. CRAGG: I know, Jim, you had a couple of questions. Does Grim or -- do Grim or Jason have any follow-on questions?

Q Oh, sure. I'll chime in for one. Again, the -- referencing the first book, I very much enjoyed the order of battle lists that were in the back that helped identify who was in theater and who was attached to whom. Will the second edition have a similar layout of forces that were in theater, time frames, and would that also include coalition forces from the other nations?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, indeed it will for U.S. Army forces. It was difficult enough to put together the order of battle for U.S. Army forces, and because the book -- the scope of the book is really limited to the Army, we chose not to include coalition forces or Marine, Air Force, Navy. That's just a decision we had to make. And our order of battle for this 18-month period is quite extensive as it is.

But yes, you will see, down to battalion level, the order of battle for all units that came through or were serving in Iraq between May of '03 and January of '05.

Q That's great.

COL. REESE: This is Colonel Reese.

Just to add on, one of the challenges Don and his team had was to try to make sense of that order of battle because, as you gentlemen surely know, unlike On Point I where we -- you looked at a force that was constituted for an invasion and pretty much, you know, stayed that way until it moved on to the next phase of the operation. During the period of our book, the command changes over several different times. Units come in; units come out, some for different lengths of time. Units are assigned to a higher headquarters at the beginning of

their deployment, but then they move around the country based on particular missions.

And so we, along with the order of battle, try to show in several different places, some maps that have the areas of responsibility lined out as to what major U.S. and coalition headquarters existed in which region of the country. But it's somewhat in the exact -- someday in the future, someone will need to do this in a greater level of detail down to, you know, where did this battalion serve between these exact days because nothing is as simple as they arrived on May the 1st and stayed somewhere until January the 30th of '05. It just didn't go that way.

Q Sure, of course. Thanks.

LT. CRAGG: And gentlemen, any other questions?

Q Yeah, actually, I have another. Again, like my colleague here, I haven't been able to download the book. But it's -- I guess the demand's too high for it.

COL. REESE: Yeah. You might try maybe later in the evening when demand is down. We're not sure but we hear about the same problem.

MR. WRIGHT: It is a large book, unfortunately, and it takes a long time because it has all the maps and charts embedded in it. So it will take a while.

Q So the only thing I'm going on is Mike Gordon's piece, I guess, yesterday in the Times talking about the transition between the Phase III and Phase IV. And, Michael seems to make the implication that you guys thought that planning for Phase IV started far too late and wasn't in place with enough time for everyone to buy in on it. Was that correct, or -- ?

MR. WRIGHT: This is Don Wright. I don't -- I would say that we don't think that, but that's pretty obvious to everybody who's looked at this. I mean, you know, you talk to the planners, you talk to the commanders involved. I think there's a consensus about this. So the question is, "Was there planning -- or, there are several questions here. "Was there planning done for Phase IV at the CENTCOM and CFLCC level?" Yes, there was. And even if you go down a little bit further to Fifth Corps, as I mentioned earlier. Fifth Corps has already war gamed some of this stuff out in exercises at Grafenveer and elsewhere.

So people are thinking about this. They're putting down on paper some of the key elements of what we would all recognize as an op plan, including some taskings to particular types of units for -- to achieve certain goals, right? But none of these plans are ever internalized or made operational. You know, there's this terrible term, operationalize a plan. Nothing like that ever really happens because we don't -- I think we found one brigade in our research that did any kind of training before crossing the berm in Kuwait for what their soldiers would actually have to do once the Saddam regime was gone. So while there are plans -- and yes, indeed you're right, I think Eclipse II is published in early April just as U.S. forces are closing in on Baghdad. Now, can you imagine that that plan really sunk down to the right levels and was internalized; it's hard to imagine that that happened. So I think it would be almost impossible to say that the planning was a success for what came after Phase III.

COL. REESE: And this is Colonel Reese, just to add another dimension to this -- to Don's answer -- even if that planning had been a bit more robust and had been more -- happened earlier on in the process and units had had a chance to actually train and prepare for it, a lot of the assumptions on which that planning was done turned out to be incorrect once coalition got to Baghdad. Some of those assumptions were that the Iraqi armed forces would be recalled in some form and available to help provide security. Another assumption was other than the very top leadership of the Iraq government, most Iraqi institutions would continue to function and only would need to know who the new leadership, or what the new leadership was, and things would continue to operate as before.

Another assumption was that the other elements of the U.S. government, non-military parts of the U.S. government would arrive very quickly and in great numbers to begin the economic and political reconstruction of the country along with a lot of assistance from coalition partners. And as you all certainly well know, almost all of those assumptions turned out to be false. So it's -- you had a real perfect storm of, you know, somewhat late planning and planning based on assumptions that turned out to be wildly off the mark.

Q : And, I'm just curious. Did you talk to General Garner in preparing this history?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, indeed, we did. Not only did we interview him, but he also came out here at one of our CSI symposiums and gave a very interesting and candid presentation about the planning and what it was like to hit the ground with ORHA very early on in this campaign. Q I was with him there -

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MR. WRIGHT: Ah, were you.

Q -- and ORHA was more on paper than it was in reality.

MR. WRIGHT: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

COL. REESE: That was a very difficult mission. I -- you know, I hope that one of the things that folks who have a chance to read -- or when they have a chance to read the book in some depth will be able to look at it and not walk away with the conclusion that senior members of the armed forces and senior civilian leadership in the U.S. government were just completely unprepared or foolish or unthinking, but, the magnitude of the tasks in front of them were so immense and the time so short that it was -- it would've been very, very difficult no matter how good the planning was and how good the team structure was in these organizations.

LT. CRAGG: And gentlemen, I don't know if there's any other questions. We have about three of four minutes before we wrap up. But if I may, I have a question and a comment for you two. Is that okay?

COL. REESE: Sure

MR. WRIGHT: And as far as time goes, Lieutenant Cragg, you can -- we have a little bit more time than -- if the questioners want to keep going or --

LT. CRAGG: Yes, we have a little bit more time. They're not going to cut us off right away.

MR. WRIGHT: Go ahead then. We'd be happy to --

LT. CRAGG: First thing, I noticed that you do have a blog site. It's at the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center where you're soliciting if anybody wants to provide any feedback. I don't know if everybody knows about that site.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, actually, we have an initial entry up there but because this day has been pretty chaotic we haven't checked it, not have we put a entry in there since our initial entry, but the plan is for us to get on there and see who might come up and leave a comment on it and then respond. And we're truly interested in hearing what people think about the book.

LT. CRAGG: And for people who might not know what the website is, do you want to provide it, or I can?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, could you please? LT. CRAGG: Yes, if anybody is interested, I've already gone out there. It's <http://usacac.army.mil/blogs>. And if you just do a search on On Point II blog, you'll get to it and it'll come -- it'd be the first one up. So if you do a search in Google. And then -- that was my comment.

And then my question. At the very, very beginning you had said something about on point looking into Afghanistan. When can we expect to see that paper, if you will? Sometime next year?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I'd say right now, I'd forecast some time in the first quarter of next year, something like that. But we're working though the manuscript right now and, you know, we are really going in to uncharted territories because most of the literature about Operation Enduring Freedom stops after Operation Anaconda in early 2002. So I hope that we can help set down some of the markers for OEF as well as we have -- like we have for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004, another area that not a lot of people have written about, with maybe the exception of Tom Ricks and a few others.

So, yeah, our charter is to try to put out there -- for the Army primarily, but also for the public if they're interested -- pretty good histories about the Army's current campaigns. You know, we have -- we're limited with the staff we have and the number of people we can interview, but we're trying to do the best we can with what we have.

LT. CRAGG: Roger that, thank you, sir. If you want to provide any closing statements, and if anybody has any last minute questions after the statements, feel free to ask. So gentlemen, whoever would like to start first, Dr. Wright or Colonel Reese.

COL. REESE: This is Colonel Reese. I'd like to just say one thing and then see if it generates any more questions. You know, a lot of the coverage so far in the -- on the internet sources and then some of the National Public Radio things that we've listened to kid of focuses on what Michael Gordon's piece focused on which was that transition period in May and June and the General Franks, General Sanchez, Paul Bremmer all that sorts of things. And that's great; that is part of the book, an important part of the book, but there's a lot more to the book than that. And one of the things that we wanted to stress actually was -- I think it was Don's phrase -- is that during this 18 month, the army essentially reinvents itself as it tries -- not tried.

But as it makes the transition from -- you know, conventional combined arms operations against another conventional force to what we would now all call full spectrum operations and counterinsurgency operations. And that transition takes place automatically. We found countless instances of units and soldiers at every level right away in April and May and June knowing that "Hey, we've got to take a hand in reestablishing local government. We have to figure out how to get the schools working. We have to assist communities with getting the power turned back on and commanders coming up with very innovative plans even before national policy is solidified, and before higher headquarters issues it to them."

And most of the chapters in the book that deal with the functional areas or -- you know, the warfighting functions as some of you know them, and we try to describe that transition and show the incredible, you know, ingenuity and initiative of units around the spectrum.

So I hope as time goes on -- and I know you gentlemen haven't been able to download it yet -- I hope that you're able to see some of that and maybe comment on it. And my last thing -- and I'll turn it over to Don or take questions -- is you can also -- and I'm not trying to sell the book because we don't sell the books -- but the GPO -- Government Printing Office is -- has it for sale on its online book store. And if you're in some way affiliated with the DOD organization, you can also request a copy from us on our website and we could -- if you're a DOD affiliate somehow, we can send you a copy for free.

MR. WRIGHT: And the only thing I would add to what Colonel Reese just mentioned was the chapters that deal with planning the transitions in command are essential, but they're setting the stage for what the soldiers have to go through in these 18 months. And most of the chapters of the book are really at the tactical level. How are the soldiers trying to deal with the guidance that they get from above as well as the challenges they face in the AORs? And they're all very different. The 1st Armored Division is facing a much different situation in Baghdad than is the 101 up in the Mosul area.

So we tried to capture that complexity. We tried to capture the improvisation and ingenuity of the average American soldier as they figure things out -- as they work through the challenges of detainee operations and working without enough linguists and trying to figure out how to oversee or supervise reconstruction operations. You know, no units deploy or very few units have access to contracting officers. A few do in the civil affairs assets that might be working with them. But they all sort of become construction managers during this timeframe. And that gets back to the full spectrum operations and the new campaign that's in the subtitle of the book. And we'd really like to stress that because we think that that is the big takeaway here. And that's what some of the media is missing right now.

LT. CRAGG: With that, Jim, Grimm or Jason, do any of you have any questions?

Q Yeah. Actually, if I could just ask one more, what comes next in this series? What era will you be covering?

MR. WRIGHT: The next one will cover February of -- February of '05 through January '07, with the beginning of the surge. So our -- we start off -- we pick up from On Point II left off and then we go up to the new way forward -- the announcement by the Bush administration that there is going to be an

increase in brigade combat teams; so again, the 24 months that follow the end of On Point II.

Q I look forward to reading it.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: And with that, any last-minute questions?

Okay, Dr. Wright and Colonel Reese. We had some great questions and comments today.

Today's program will be available online at the Bloggers' Link on dod.mil, where you will be able to access a story based on today's call along with source documents such as the bios, the audio file and, of course, the transcript.

Again, thank you, Dr. Wright and Colonel Reese, for joining us, and our blogger participants as well. This concludes today's event. Feel free to disconnect. And thank you, gentlemen.

COL. REESE: Thank you.

DR. WRIGHT: Thank you. We appreciate it.

Q Thanks a lot, now.

END.